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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2503

December 15, 2009

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary of Health and Human Services
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

On December 9th President Obama announced more than \$500 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) awards to support major construction and renovation projects at community health centers (CHCs).

Twelve of the twenty-one community health centers in Missouri applied to the Administration to receive funding under this grant process yet not one of them received funding. In fact, many of the states in the region including, Nebraska, Kansas, Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky and Wisconsin did not receive funding. While I am dismayed to receive this news, I am even more frustrated to read the report by the Boston Globe stating "roughly one of every eight dollars that the federal Health Resources and Services Administration committed to community clinics is bound for Massachusetts."

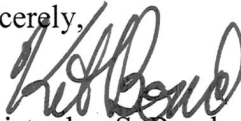
After doing the math, it appears that Massachusetts received roughly \$80 million, almost 16 percent of the total grant award under this most recent announcement. California received roughly \$65 million, almost 13 percent of the total grant award under this most recent grant announcement. Missouri on the other hand received nothing under this grant announcement. Missouri CHC's have already received \$26 million in ARRA funds, but this pales in comparison to the \$172 million that California has already received, and the \$37 million that Massachusetts has already received in ARRA funding. Based on HHS's ARRA funding website (<http://www.hhs.gov/recovery/programs/hrsa/index.html>) when the most recent award announcement is added it brings the total to \$238 million for California, \$118 million for Massachusetts and \$26 million for Missouri in ARRA funding for community health centers.

The Administration cannot tell me that the need for health services is any less in rural and urban Missouri and other heartland states than those communities funded in Massachusetts and California. While I respect the competitive grant process I am troubled by the fact that 29 percent of the funding for the most recent ARRA grant announcement went to only 2 states and many states, all on the front lines of trying to provide healthcare to our most vulnerable populations, did not receive any funding.

This disparity in funding raises troubling questions about whether every effort was made in the competitive grant process to distribute fairly across the country this federal taxpayer money. What efforts were made to ensure that federal taxpayer money was distributed fairly under this competitive grant process? What criterion was used to determine which applicants were chosen? What was the geographic makeup of the members on the Objective Review Committee? Since the amount of capital funding for CHCs available through the Facility Investment Program (FIP) opportunity was so significant and unprecedented in the history of the program, what extra steps were taken during the review process to ensure that the applications were sound and shovel ready? Also, why were no applications from Missouri funded in the most recent grant announcement? Missouri would benefit from feedback from your Administration as to why they did not receive funding under this most recent grant proposal.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I hope you will give this issue your utmost consideration and I look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



Christopher S. Bond